In his 2001 opera Orpheus Kristall, Manfred Stahnke presents an autistic Orpheus bewildered within the complexity of a multimedia environment. The hallucinating Orpheus, struggling with his thoughts, seeks his lost self-identity amidst his immediate world and its extension represented by the use of Internet. In this pioneering work, Stahnke extends the borders of live music on stage with the integration of a vast external world through the Internet as a part of the performance medium. I argue that the Internet, as a technological artifact, embodies the role of mediation in Orpheus Kristall, clarifying the allegorical relationship between Orpheus and his extended world.

On the basis of interviews I conducted with Manfred Stahnke in 2011, as well as his own articles, where he explains much about his compositional procedures, I explore the allegorical representation of key contemporary existential issues within Orpheus Kristall, made possible through Stanhke’s innovative approaches to digital media and microtonality. Through analysis of its intricate musical structures and technological dimensions, I demonstrate that Orpheus Kristall is a successful example of a multimedia art piece that draws upon mythology in order to address complex questions related to cultural and personal identity, while shedding light on the subtle amalgamation of the technology and microtonality.